



*ISTEP+: Grade 3*

English/Language Arts

Released Items and Scoring Notes

**Writing Prompt**  
**Standard 5: Writing Applications**  
**Standard 6: Language Conventions**

# 1

## The Book

Read the writing prompt below and complete the writing activity.

One day, you return to your room to find a book sitting on your bed. It is not a book that you have ever seen before. It is old and worn. You open the book and the pages seem to glow. Slowly, something starts to happen. Write a story about what happens next.

### **Prewriting Activity**

- Use the space on the next page to help you plan your story.
- Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Be sure to include details to make your story interesting.
- Here are some questions to help you in your writing:
  - ✓ What adventure do you have?
  - ✓ What interesting characters do you meet?
  - ✓ How does your adventure end?

## Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 6</b>	
A Score Point 6 paper is rare. It fully accomplishes the task and has a distinctive quality that sets it apart as an outstanding performance.	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing stay fully focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stay on the topic?</li> <li>• avoid rambling and/or repeating information?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include thorough and complete ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include in-depth information and supporting details?</li> <li>• fully explore many facets of the topic?</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does the writing have clear order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow a clear sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end?</li> <li>• have a logical progression of main ideas and support?</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit exceptional word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include dynamic words and provide rich details, strong verbs, and/or vivid descriptions?</li> <li>• demonstrate control of a challenging vocabulary?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing fluent and easy to read? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sound natural?</li> <li>• include varied sentence patterns? (Writing may include complex sentence patterns.)</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample display a strong sense of audience? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a unique perspective? It may be original, lively, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have a clear voice).</li> </ul>	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

## Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 5</b>	
A Score Point 5 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the overall level of sophistication and consistency of a Score Point 6 paper.	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing stay focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stay on the topic?</li> <li>• very seldom ramble and/or repeat information?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include many relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide some in-depth information?</li> <li>• provide supporting details?</li> <li>• explore many facets of the topic?</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does the writing have clear order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow a clear sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end?</li> <li>• have a logical progression of main ideas and support?</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit more than adequate word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include dynamic words and use vivid or challenging words?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing fluent and easy to read? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sound natural?</li> <li>• include varied sentence patterns? (Writing may include complex sentences.)</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample display a sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may have a unique perspective. It may be original, lively, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have voice).</li> </ul>	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

## Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

### SCORE POINT 4

A Score Point 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

#### Ideas and Content

Does the writing stay mostly focused?

- Does it mostly stay on the topic? (Writing may include minor tangents.)
- Writing may include some rambling and/or repetition.

Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas and information?

- Does it present related information?
- Writing may not fully develop details; it may list ideas with some detail.

#### Organization

Does the writing have order? Does it

- follow a sequence, but possibly show a lapse (e.g., may start out with a clear beginning, but wander; may be missing a beginning, but have a conclusion)?
- have a logical progression of main ideas and support? (Writing may have lapses.)

#### Style

Does the writing sample exhibit adequate word usage? Does it

- include mostly ordinary/common words (although some vivid or challenging words may be used)?

Is the writing readable? Does it

- flow naturally most of the time (although it may be choppy or repetitive or may have run-on sentences/fragments in spots)?
- generally lack varied sentence patterns (although it may include some complex sentences)?

Does the writing sample display some sense of audience?

- Is there an attempt to develop a unique perspective—original, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have some voice)?

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

## Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 3</b>	
A Score Point 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing stay somewhat focused?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it stay minimally focused on topic? (Writer may get distracted; may have a lapse in focus.)</li> <li>• Writing may ramble and/or repeat information.</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide minimal information and not begin to exhaust the possibilities?</li> <li>• provide minimal details, but does not develop details?</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does the writing have some order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show minimal evidence of logical sequence (e.g., may be missing a beginning, a middle, or an end)?</li> <li>• require the reader to fill in gaps in the sequence?</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contain ordinary/common words?</li> <li>• exhibit minimal evidence of word choice?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing mostly readable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may be difficult to follow in some sections.</li> <li>• Writing may be hard to understand; the connection of ideas and information may be unclear.</li> <li>• Does the writing lack sentence variety?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing display little sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may be repetitive, predictable, and/or dull (i.e., have minimal voice).</li> </ul>	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

## Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 2</b>	
<p>A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.</p>	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing exhibit less than minimal focus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writer may get distracted or drift away from topic.</li> <li>• Topic may not be developed.</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include few relevant ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may include unfinished/fragmented ideas.</li> <li>• Writing may include only one or two bits of information.</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does writing have little order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show little evidence of logical sequence (e.g., have no clear beginning, middle, or end)?</li> <li>• have some ideas that may not be related to each other?</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contain ordinary/common words?</li> <li>• show no evidence of attention to word choice?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing hard to read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reader may have to fill in gaps or guess what the writer was trying to say.</li> <li>• Does the writing lack sentence variety?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample display little sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text may be flat, lifeless (i.e., have no voice).</li> </ul>	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.



## Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

### SCORE POINT 1

A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. It exhibits considerable difficulty in areas of development, organization, and writing style. The writing is generally either very brief or rambling and repetitive, sometimes resulting in a response that may be difficult to read or comprehend.

#### **Ideas and Content**

**Does the writing have little or no focus on topic?**

- Content may convey little meaning.

**Does the writing sample include almost no relevant ideas and information?**

- Writing may contain unfinished ideas.
- Writing is likely to be brief.

#### **Organization**

**Does writing have little or no order?**

- Does it lack the sequence of a beginning, a middle, and an end?
- Writing may have ideas that are not related to each other.

#### **Style**

**Does the writing sample exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it**

- contain a very limited and simple vocabulary?

**Is the writing hard to read?**

- Is sentence construction frequently incorrect?

**Does the writing sample display little or no sense of audience?**

- Writing may be flat and lifeless (i.e., have no voice).

**NOTE:** These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.



## English/Language Arts

### Constructed-Response Items

Session three, English/Language Arts, contains a reading comprehension task. This task allows the students to demonstrate their understanding and comprehension of narrative or informational text. The reading comprehension task consists of one passage and several constructed-response (CR) questions. Because this is a reading comprehension task, all the information students need to answer the questions correctly is in the text. All responses should be based on information from the text and will be scored for reading comprehension *only*. The following pages show the CR questions.

An example of a top-score response is given for each CR question. The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.

## English/Language Arts

### 2-point Constructed-Response (CR) Rubric

<b>2 points</b>	<b>Proficient</b> The response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The information given is text-based and relevant to the task.
<b>1 point</b>	<b>Partially Proficient</b> The response fulfills some of the requirements of the task, but some of the information may be too general, too simplistic, or not supported by the text.
<b>0 point</b>	<b>Not Proficient</b> The response does not fulfill the requirements of the task because it contains information that is inaccurate, incomplete, and/or missing altogether.

**Constructed-Response**  
**Standard 3: Reading Comprehension & Analysis of Literary Text**

**Question 1**

- 1** Describe the squirrel's MAIN problem in the story. How does she solve it? Support your answer with details from the story.

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**Top-Score Response:**

The squirrel's main problem is that the crow would not help her with the planting. She solved it by plowing the field, planting the seeds, hoeing the weeds, harvesting the grain, and bringing it to market all by herself. At the end of the story, she did not give any of money to the crow when he asked for his share because he had done nothing to help earn it.

***Note:** The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

**Constructed-Response**  
**Standard 3: Reading Comprehension & Analysis of Literary Text**

**Question 2**

**2** How would you describe the squirrel in the story? Support your answer with details from the story.

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**Top-Score Response:**

I would describe the squirrel as hardworking because she plowed the fields, planted the seeds, pulled the weeds, harvested the grain and took it to market all by herself. The squirrel is kind because she gave the crow many chances to help with the field work. In the end, she is fair because she did not give crow any money since he did not help her with any of the work.

***Note:** The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

**Constructed-Response**  
**Standard 3: Reading Comprehension & Analysis of Literary Text**

**Question 3**

- 3** What does the author **MOST LIKELY** want you to learn from this story? Support your answer with details from the story.

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**Top-Score Responses:**

The author wants us to learn that if we want something, we have to work for it; we can't expect others to do everything for us. The squirrel did all of the work to grow the wheat without any help from the crow, but the crow still expected the squirrel to share the money she brought home from the market. The author doesn't want us to be lazy like the crow, who was surprised and disappointed when the squirrel did not give him any money.

***Note:** The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

**Extended-Response**  
**Standard 5: Writing Applications**  
**Standard 6: Language Conventions**

**Question 4**

**4** Read this story. Then complete the writing activity that follows.

**My Favorite Thing**

I love Saturdays. Why? Because that is the day I can wear my old ripped jeans. My mom won't let me wear them to school or anywhere else. On Saturdays, I just stay at home, so she says it is okay. My jeans are so soft. They feel like butter. They used to be dark blue, but now they are faded, and one of the back pockets is falling off. There is an old grass stain on one of the knees from when I tried to slide into home base. My mom tried to wash it out, but I was secretly happy when the stain refused to go away. I love my jeans!

What is your favorite thing? Is it an old stuffed animal, a basketball, a necklace, or something else? Describe your favorite thing and tell why it is your favorite. Be sure to use details to support your writing.

## Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 4</b>	
A Score Point 4 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task.	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing stay fully focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stay on the topic?</li> <li>• avoid rambling or repeating information?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include many relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide ample information?</li> <li>• provide many supporting details?</li> <li>• explore many facets of the topic?</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does the writing have clear order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow a clear sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end?</li> <li>• have a logical progression of main ideas and support?</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit more than adequate word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include dynamic words and use vivid or challenging words?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing fluent and easy to read? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sound natural?</li> <li>• include varied sentence patterns? (Writing may include complex sentences.)</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample display a sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may have a unique perspective. It may be original, lively, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have voice).</li> </ul>	

**NOTE:** These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

## Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 3</b>	
<p>A Score Point 3 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.</p>	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing stay mostly focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mostly stay on the topic? (Writing may include minor tangents.)</li> <li>• include some rambling and/or repetition?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• present related information?</li> <li>• provide some supporting details?</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does the writing have order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follow a sequence, but possibly show a lapse (e.g., may start out with a clear beginning, but wander; may be missing a beginning, but have a conclusion)?</li> <li>• have a logical progression of main ideas and support? (Writing may have lapses.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit adequate word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include mostly ordinary/common words (although some vivid or challenging words may be used)?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing readable? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flow naturally most of the time (although it may be choppy or repetitive or may have run-on sentences/fragments in spots)?</li> <li>• generally lack varied sentence patterns (although it may include some complex sentences)?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing display some sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an attempt to develop a unique perspective—original, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have some voice)?</li> </ul>	

**NOTE:** These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.



## Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 2</b>	
A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing stay somewhat focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stay minimally focused on topic? (Writer may get distracted; may have a lapse in focus.)</li> <li>• ramble and/or repeat information?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide minimal information and not begin to exhaust the possibilities?</li> <li>• provide minimal details, but does not develop details?</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does the writing have some order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show minimal evidence of logical sequence (e.g., may be missing a beginning, a middle, or an end)?</li> <li>• require the reader to fill in gaps in the sequence?</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contain ordinary/common words?</li> <li>• exhibit minimal evidence of word choice?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing mostly readable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may be difficult to follow in some sections.</li> <li>• Writing may be hard to understand; the connection of ideas and information may be unclear.</li> <li>• Does the writing lack sentence variety?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing display little sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may be repetitive, predictable, and/or dull (i.e., have minimal voice).</li> </ul>	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

## Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

<b>SCORE POINT 1</b>	
<p>A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes or fails to accomplish the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.</p>	
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	
<p>Does the writing exhibit little or no focus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writer may get distracted, may drift away from topic, or may convey little meaning.</li> <li>• Topic may not be developed.</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample include few or no relevant ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing may include unfinished/fragmented ideas.</li> <li>• Writing may include only one or two bits of information.</li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<p>Does writing have little or no order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show little evidence of logical sequence (e.g., have no clear beginning, middle, or end)?</li> <li>• have some ideas that may not be related to each other?</li> </ul>	
<b>Style</b>	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contain a limited or simple vocabulary?</li> <li>• show no evidence of attention to word choice?</li> </ul> <p>Is the writing hard to read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reader may have to fill in gaps or guess what the writer was trying to say.</li> <li>• Is sentence construction frequently incorrect?</li> </ul> <p>Does the writing sample display little or no sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text may be flat, lifeless (i.e., have no voice).</li> </ul>	

**NOTE:** These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

## Language Conventions Rubric Grades 3–4

In their writing, students will apply the Standard English conventions defined in the Indiana Academic Standards for their grade and all previous grades.

Score	Does writing exhibit a very good command of language skills?
<b>4</b>	<p>In a Score Point 4 paper, there are no errors that impair the flow of communication. Errors that appear will generally be of the first-draft variety; they have a minor impact on the overall communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there few or no errors in beginning capitalization?</li> <li>• Are there few or no errors in capitalization of proper nouns?</li> <li>• Are there few or no errors in ending punctuation?</li> <li>• Are there few or no errors in subject and verb agreement?</li> <li>• Are there few or no errors in the spelling of grade-level-appropriate words?</li> <li>• Does writing have few or no run-on sentences or sentence fragments?</li> </ul>
Score	Does writing exhibit an adequate command of language skills?
<b>3</b>	<p>In a Score Point 3 paper, errors are occasional but do not impede the flow of communication; the writer's meaning is not seriously obscured by language errors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is most beginning capitalization correct?</li> <li>• Are most proper nouns capitalized correctly?</li> <li>• Do most sentences end with correct punctuation?</li> <li>• Do most sentences have correct subject and verb agreement?</li> <li>• Are most grade-level-appropriate words spelled correctly?</li> <li>• Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.</li> </ul>
Score	Does writing exhibit a minimal command of language skills?
<b>2</b>	<p>In a Score Point 2 paper, errors are generally frequent and may cause the reader to stop and reread part of the writing. While some aspects of the writing may be more consistently correct than others, the existing errors do impair communication. With a little extra effort on the reader's part, it is still possible to discern most, if not all, of what the writer is trying to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is some beginning capitalization correct?</li> <li>• Are some proper nouns capitalized correctly?</li> <li>• Do some sentences end with correct punctuation?</li> <li>• Do some sentences have correct subject and verb agreement?</li> <li>• Are some grade-level-appropriate words spelled correctly?</li> <li>• Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.</li> </ul>
Score	Does writing exhibit a less than minimal command of language skills?
<b>1</b>	<p>In a Score Point 1 paper, errors are serious and numerous; they cause the reader to struggle to discern the writer's meaning. Errors are frequently of a wide variety. There may be sections where it is impossible to ascertain what the writer is attempting to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there many errors in beginning capitalization?</li> <li>• Does writing have little or no evidence of capitalization of proper nouns?</li> <li>• Is end punctuation missing or incorrect?</li> <li>• Are there many errors in subject and verb agreement?</li> <li>• Are there many errors in the spelling of grade-level-appropriate words?</li> <li>• Are there run-on sentences or sentence fragments?</li> </ul>

**NOTE:** The elements of this rubric are applied holistically; no element is intended to supersede any other element. The variety and proportion of errors in relation to the length of the writing sample are considered.